

## Community resources

[Follow us on Twitter](#) [Check our Reddit](#) [Twitter this](#) [Digg this page](#) [Contact us on IRC](#)

*courage is contagious*

## Viewing cable 07PORTAUPRINCE522, PREVAL: CHAVEZ VISIT A MESS

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g.

**#07PORTAUPRINCE522.**

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">07PORTAUPRINCE522</a>	<a href="#">2007-03-16 19:16</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Port Au Prince</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.haitiliberte.com>

<http://bit.ly/mDfYBE>

<http://bit.ly/mcuO3r>

VZCZCXRO8080  
PP RUEHQU  
DE RUEHPU #0522/01 0751916  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 161916Z MAR 07  
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5626  
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 1468  
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 1291  
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC PRIORITY 0752  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL PRIORITY  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1166

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 000522

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAR  
DRL  
S/CRS

SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR LAC/CAR  
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)  
TREASURY FOR MAUREEN WAFER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/05/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [XM](#) [XL](#) [HA](#) [VE](#)  
SUBJECT: PREVAL: CHAVEZ VISIT A MESS

REF: A. PORT AU PRINCE 492  
[B](#). PORT AU PRINCE 433  
[C](#). PORT AU PRINCE 266  
[D](#). PORT AU PRINCE 78

PORT AU PR 00000522 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: To hear President Rene Preval tell it, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez' visit to Haiti on March 12 was a logistical nightmare and an annoyance to the GoH. Chavez thwarted Preval's efforts to keep the public profile of the visit low key. In the aftermath of the visit, Preval told Ambassador and others that he is skeptical of Chavez's promises, especially on delivery of gasoline through the Petrocaribe agreement. Secretary General of the Presidency Fritz Longchamps told Polcouns that the GoH viewed the Chavez visit as the price to pay for whatever assistance Venezuela provides to Haiti. Aside from new and renewed pledges of assistance (ref A) Chavez made concessions on several points allowing Haiti to more easily implement Petrocaribe, according to Michael Lecorps, the head of the GoH office tasked with Petrocaribe. Preval and company may be overselling their irritation toward Chavez for our benefit, but Preval has consistently voiced wariness of Chavez in conversations with Emboffs going back to the early stages of the presidential campaign in 2005. In any case, it appears that Preval will do what it takes to elicit assistance from Chavez, but has otherwise shown no interest in joining Chavez in his broader "Bolivarian agenda." End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Preval told Ambassador the evening of March 13 that Chavez was a difficult guest. The Venezulean did not have a GOH invitation but insisted on coming to mark Venezuelan flag day (ref C) and only the arrival of two advance planes two days before the visit gave Port au Prince warning Chavez was on his way. After finally arriving at the Palace, Chavez made Preval and his team wait 40 more minutes while he spoke to Castro by telephone. Responding to Ambassador's observation that giving Chavez a platform to spout anti-American slogans here was hard to explain given our close relationship and support of Haiti and of Preval's government in particular, Preval stressed that he had worked hard to stop much of Chavez' proposed grandstanding. He vetoed a Chavez-led procession/demonstration from the airport to the Venezuelan Embassy (substituting a wreath laying at Port-au-Prince's monument to Bolivar) and limited the length of the press conference. Chavez, for his part, insisted that the press conference proceed as scheduled, thus cutting into bilateral meeting time. Preval added that he, Preval, is "just an independent petit bourgeoisie" and doesn't go for the grand gestures that Chavez favors. Haiti needs aid from all its friends, Preval added, and he is sure that the US understands his difficult position. The President was uncomfortable with the exchange, later noting that Haiti's chattering classes will claim that the Chavez visit led to cancellation of a rumored visit here by President bush.

[1](#)3. (C) According to UN SRSG Edmund Mulet (who hosted an ebullient Preval for dinner following the capture of Cite Soleil gang leader Evans Jeune later in the week), Preval told him that he didn't trust Chavez to follow through on his promises and requested that the Cuban ambassador participate in the sessions. The Cuban government went further in sending Vice President Esteban Lazo Hernandez, who had participated in other trilateral meetings with Haiti and

Venezuela. Preval also told former UNSRSG Juan Gabriel Valdez (visiting here on behalf of the OAS) that he was appalled by Chavez's behavior at the airport and on the way to the palace. He refused to get out of the car when Chavez insisted on greeting his demonstrators in the street on his way in from the airport. Preval and others in the government believe that the Venezuelan Charge d'Affaires orchestrated and paid for the demonstrations by Famni Lavalas militants at the airport, the Venezuelan Embassy, and the palace, which numbered roughly 1,000 and also called for the return of former President Aristide.

14. (C) 'Now that this trip is over, a great weight has

PORT AU PR 00000522 002.2 OF 002

been lifted off my shoulders,' Longchamps told Polcouns on March 14, stressing that Haiti had to host Chavez if the GoH was going to get any aid and assistance from Venezuela. The GoH does not expect that Chavez will follow through on most of his promises, but even half, or a quarter, would be significant. The most valuable use of Venezuelan aid, according to Longchamps, would be funding for salaries, supplies, medicine, and shelter for the Cuban doctors and advisors currently working in Haiti: the GoH hopes this funding will come from the USD 20 million humanitarian reserve fund that Chavez re-pledged. Longchamps told Polcouns that Haiti has about 300 Cubans working officially in Haiti, of whom 90 percent are doctors. Also, Longchamps recalled, Preval brought the Cubans to Haiti during his first term, and the continued success of this program is important to the President. Longchamps added that the trilateral cooperation bureau that Cuba and Venezuela promised to set up in Port-au-Prince is 'just an idea,' with no definite plans for implementation. Haiti has no plans to join the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (known as ALBA), Venezuela's free trade zone.

15. (C) The Petrocaribe agreement, through which Haiti would get a 25-year loan on 40 percent of the fuel it purchases from Venezuela is still in discussion stages, and Preval told Valdes that ever since the initial shipment in May, 2006, Venezuela has made no real attempts at progressing with the agreement. Apparently the two countries signed off on a few details during Chavez' visit (which Longchamps told Polcouns the GoH pressured Chavez into signing), such as allowing Haiti's oil industry to ship the product (Venezuela had insisted on the shipping rights until now), and giving the oil companies the right to receive the product in place of a state-owned oil company, as previously stipulated by Venezuela (ref D). Industry representatives claim that despite the progress made during Chavez' visit, the agreement would still take over a year to implement and suspect that it will never take place at all. The head of Haiti's Petrocaribe office (known as the monetization bureau), Michael Lecorps, confirmed that Venezuela doubled its commitment to 14,000 barrels per day and pledged to work with the oil industry in Haiti, an unprecedented move on Chavez' part, according to Lecorps.

16. (C) Comment. The Ambassador and Polcouns have voiced concern to senior officials that Chavez had used his visit as a platform for an attack on Haiti's closest and steadiest bilateral ally, most recently with PM Alexis yesterday. It is clear that the visit has left a bad taste in our interlocutors' mouths and they are now into damage control. Preval himself has no love for Chavez: Valdes reminded us that during a private Preval visit to Venezuela prior to the 2006 elections, Chavez blind-sided him with a draft statement pledging support for the return of Aristide. Preval has yet to forgive him, according to intimates. At no time has Preval given any indication that he is interested in associating Haiti with Chavez' broader "revolutionary agenda." We believe that the GOH will continue to argue that hosting Chavez was an unavoidable consequence of Preval's effort to solicit aid from any quarter, and that Preval did his best to rein Chavez in. Preval himself will continue to

focus his public remarks on Venezuelan (and Cuban) assistance  
for Haiti -- it is neither in his character -- nor in his  
calcuation -- to repudiate Chavez, even as the Venezuelan  
abuses his hospitality at home.

SANDERSON

=====CABLE ENDS=====